



External and Internal Institutional Value Structures (Institutional Logics) in Implementing the BerAKHLAK Civil Service Core Values: Evidence from Sorong City Government, Indonesia

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Abstract

The implementation of the BerAKHLAK civil service core values at Sorong City Government takes place within a plurality of competing institutional logics. Empirical indicators a 2023 Integrity Assessment Survey (SPI) of 58.20 ("vulnerable"), a cross-OPD synergy index of 57/100, digital system adoption below 50%, and 38% of civil servants not understanding BerAKHLAK signal that the internalisation problem is structural and rooted in a complex institutional-logics configuration. This study analyses the institutional value structure underlying BerAKHLAK implementation through the institutional logic's framework, covering four dimensions: logic dominance, compatibility with BerAKHLAK values, inter-logic conflict, and balance strategies. A qualitative single-case study approach was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 34 purposively selected informants, participant observation across seven OPDs over 48 days, and analysis of 23 official documents. Data were analysed interactively through condensation, display, and conclusion drawing, with source, method, and member-check triangulation. Bureaucratic-hierarchical and relational logics dominate practice, while BerAKHLAK logic remains subordinate and situationally active (only 8–10% in internal decisions vs 30% in externally-monitored situations). Compatibility is low-to-partial, particularly for Accountable, Competent, Adaptive, and Collaborative. Inter-logic conflict is intense (68% of implementing staff experience >3 conflicts/week) with passive resolution patterns (69% silent compromise or passive conformity). Adaptation strategies are dominated by decoupling (71% of OPDs). The dramatic 2025 surge of the Public Service Index to the Highest Green Zone (90.2) without corresponding internal improvement confirms symbolic isomorphic response over substantive value internalisation.

Introduction

The implementation of the BerAKHLAK civil service core values at Sorong City Government displays empirical dynamics that are not fully linear when read across public-service and bureaucratic-governance indicators. The 2024 Public Service Index (IPP) placed Sorong City

at 2.90 (category C), with sectoral subscores of 3.06 (Social Affairs and Hospital) and 2.58 (Civil Registration). By April 2025, however, Sorong City recorded 90.20 and entered the Highest-Quality Green Zone for Papua Barat and Papua Barat Daya a dramatic 32-point surge indicating substantial improvement in service standards, complaint handling, and compliance with national public-service assessment components.

Yet when linked to internal integrity and governance indicators, structural challenges persist. The 2023 Integrity Assessment Survey (SPI) recorded a score of 58.20 (“vulnerable” category), the cross-OPD synergy index stands at 57/100, and internal data indicate that personnel-management decisions particularly job rotation and promotion are still influenced by relational considerations beyond formal merit-based mechanisms. This duality significant improvement in externally measured service output alongside limited progress in integrity, institutional coordination, and internal governance consistency signals that output improvement is not yet accompanied by systemic strengthening of the internal bureaucratic dimension.

Theoretically, bureaucratic work culture can be understood as a concrete manifestation of institutional logics operating in the organisation, where values, norms, and daily practices are shaped by interaction between formal state logics (professionalism, accountability, public service) and informal logics such as traditional hierarchy and social relationality (Nengsih, 2024). Cultural change including BerAKHLAK internalization therefore depends not only on administrative instruments but on the extent to which a new logic can negotiate, displace, or coexist with old logics (Biyikli, 2024; Gruszewska, 2025). Civil-servant behaviour is shaped by tension between rational-legal demands emphasising professionalism and integrity, and social values such as seniority, closeness, and personal loyalty (Walter & Veit, 2025).

Within this perspective, Sorong City’s conditions reflect a classic situation of institutional-logics plurality: the bureaucracy operates under multiple logics simultaneously—a modern-state logic emphasising merit and professionalism alongside a community/relational logic emphasising solidarity, kinship, and social affirmation (Sarjito & Mursidi, 2025). Although institutional logics theory has developed extensively in international literature, its application to Indonesian local bureaucracy particularly in culturally complex settings such as Papua Barat Daya remains very limited. Most existing studies use the framework in private organisations, professional bodies, or governments in developed countries. This study addresses that gap by diagnosing the configuration of competing logics that shapes BerAKHLAK implementation. The objective is to analyse the institutional value structure across four logics dimensions: dominance, value compatibility, daily inter-logic conflict, and balance strategy.

Theoretical Framework

The institutional logics approach has developed through complementary contributions, each with distinctive strengths and limitations. (Nengsih, 2024) established that value conflict is an inherent consequence of organisational existence within multi-institutional systems, strongly explaining why value clashes occur but offering limited operational guidance. Stevenson et al. (2024) deepened this by explaining how logics operate within organisations and shape actor attention and decisions, though their treatment tends to be descriptive. (Damayanthi & Gooneratne, 2024a) demonstrated organisational responses to logic conflict—compromise, hybridisation, decoupling without yet providing implementation guidance. Scott (2014) complemented through three institutional pillars (regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive) explaining why formal rules do not automatically change behaviour. DiMaggio & Powell (1983) explained ceremonial compliance and isomorphic pressure that render change frequently symbolic, though they tend to view organisations as passive.

Lounsbury & Wang (2023) approach is most relevant because it bridges macro structure and micro practice operationally and captures logic plurality dynamically, including how actors navigate, compromise, and combine logics without reducing conflict to deviance. They identify four key elements: (1) dominant institutional logic, the logic most strongly shaping actor attention and preferences (Almandoz & Thornton, 2025a); (2) logic-value compatibility, determining whether new values can translate into practice (Deka Kalita et al., 2025); (3) daily inter-logic conflict, where actors face competing demands creating decision dilemmas (Damayanthi & Gooneratne, 2024b); and (4) balance strategy, organisational efforts to manage or hybridise logics while preserving legitimacy and operational effectiveness (Mahasuar, 2025). These four dimensions form a coherent analytical lens for systematically diagnosing why institutional pluralism in Sorong's bureaucracy fails to translate into BerAKHLAK internalisation.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a qualitative single-case study approach to understand the external and internal institutional value structure in BerAKHLAK implementation. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture institutional-logics configurations, value-conflict narratives, and adaptation mechanisms emerging in bureaucratic practice. Following (Rahman et al., 2024), a single-case design enabled comprehensive examination of one analytical unit—a local-government organization within its real context. Sorong City was selected for its complex institutional characteristics: ethnic and customary diversity influencing bureaucratic dynamics, combined with the 2023 SPI score of 58.20 (“vulnerable” category) and the cross-OPD synergy index of 57/100.

Data were collected from 34 informants selected through purposive and snowball sampling, comprising: (i) strategic officials (Regional Secretary, heads of BKPSDM, Bappeda, Inspectorate, Organisation Bureau, Legal Bureau); (ii) cross-sectoral OPD leaders and officials (Civil Registration, Investment/One-Stop Services, Communications, Health, Education, Financial Management) with their administrators and supervisors; (iii) functional officials and implementing staff (grades II–III) across OPDs; (iv) external stakeholders (customary leaders, professional associations, service users, senior journalists); and (v) independent observers (academics from local universities and a regional ombudsman representative). Participant observation across seven OPDs was conducted over 48 days, supplemented by analysis of 23 documents (regulations, ethics codes, sanction procedures, ombudsman reports, integrity audits, local media coverage, cross-OPD coordination forums). Analysis used the (Miles et al., 2014) interactive model with open, axial, and selective coding. Validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Ethical clearance was obtained from [Ethics Committee Name and Number].

Results and Discussion

Findings show that bureaucratic practice in Sorong City is not driven by formal structure alone but by an institutional-logics configuration in which BerAKHLAK has not become the primary behavioural reference because it still interacts and frequently clashes with deeply rooted bureaucratic-hierarchical and relational logics.

Dominant Institutional Logic

Sorong City Government operates within a plurality of institutional logics where at least three large logics interact simultaneously: bureaucratic-hierarchical logic, relational logic based on kinship and group identity, and the public-service logic carried by the BerAKHLAK framework. Their interaction is asymmetric, forming a dominance structure that directly shapes

how the organisation decides, allocates resources, and builds work relations. Figure 1 maps logic dominance across six concrete decision situations.

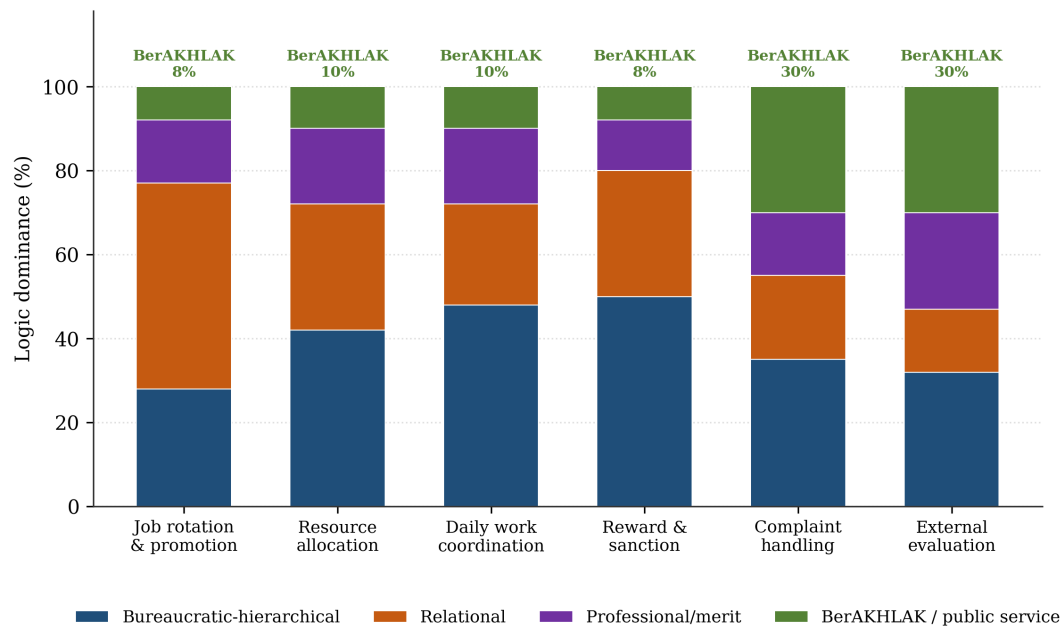


Figure 1. Distribution of dominant institutional logics across decision situations

Source: Processed thematic research data, 2026

Figure 1 reveals a stark pattern. In situations dominated by internal organisational decisions job rotation and promotion, resource allocation, daily work coordination, reward and sanction BerAKHLAK reaches only 8–10%, while bureaucratic-hierarchical and relational logics combined account for 70–80%. The most critical position is job rotation and promotion, where relational logic dominates at 49% against only 8% for BerAKHLAK. Conversely, the two situations where BerAKHLAK gains a more significant share are complaint handling (30%) and external evaluation (30%)—both situations directly linked to external oversight, confirming that public-service logic is activated more by external pressure than by internal conviction. This activation pattern echoes Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) decoupling: formally adopted values are not fully integrated into daily practice but selectively activated when external monitoring intensifies.

Two further dominance markers reinforce this picture. Decision-making patterns show that of 34 documented coordination meetings, only 6 (17.6%) recorded substantive data-based deliberation; 58.8% were dominated by leadership directives, and 23.6% were purely administrative confirmation. Resource allocation tells the same story: BerAKHLAK internalisation programmes receive an average of only 1.16% of OPD budgets—less than one-third of the minimum threshold recommended for effective culture-change programmes. As (Hendra et al., 2026) note, a logic dominates not because it is inherently superior but because of stronger structural support; in Sorong, BerAKHLAK lacks the institutional scaffolding (incentives, accountability mechanisms, experiential design) that bureaucratic-hierarchical and relational logics have accumulated over decades.

Compatibility of Logics with BerAKHLAK Values

Figure 2 systematically maps where compatibility and contradiction occur between dominant logics and the seven BerAKHLAK values.

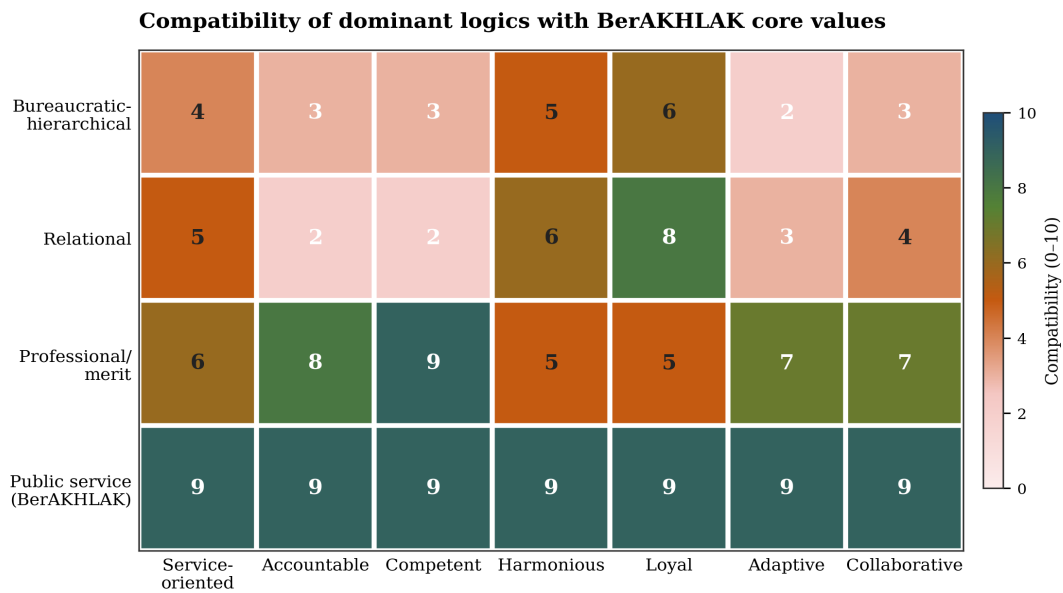


Figure 2. Compatibility matrix between dominant logics and the seven BerAKHLAK core values

Source: Processed thematic research data, 2026

Figure 2 reveals three diagnostic patterns. First, the bureaucratic-hierarchical logic scores lowest on Adaptive (2), Accountable (3), Competent (3), and Collaborative (3) precisely the values requiring bottom-up initiative, merit-based accountability, and horizontal collaboration that hierarchical logic structurally suppresses. Second, the relational logic shows the sharpest contradiction with Accountable (2) and Competent (2) but the highest compatibility with Loyal (8) though the loyalty it produces is personal-relational rather than institutional-professional, the very form BerAKHLAK seeks to redefine. Third, professional/merit logic shows strong compatibility (7–9) with most BerAKHLAK values, but Figure 1 already established that this logic remains subordinate in actual practice. The contradiction pattern explains why nationally launched BerAKHLAK socialisation produces uneven results: values protected by the dominant logics (Service-oriented under external pressure, Loyal in personal-relational form) achieve partial adoption, while values requiring change to the dominant logics themselves (Accountable, Competent, Adaptive, Collaborative) stagnate.

Daily Inter-Logic Conflict

Conflict between logics is not occasional but a daily condition across all hierarchical levels. Figure 3 documents conflict frequency by job level alongside resolution-strategy choices.

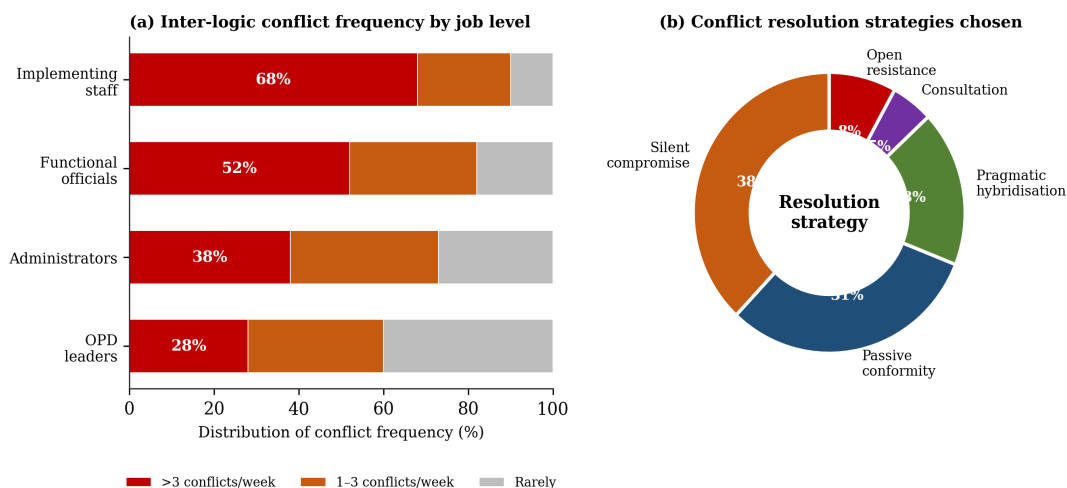


Figure 3. Inter-logic conflict frequency by job level and resolution strategies chosen

Source: Processed thematic research data, 2026

Figure 3(a) shows a clear hierarchical gradient: 68% of implementing staff experience inter-logic conflict more than three times per week, declining progressively to 28% at the OPD-leader level. This is not random distribution but structural staff closest to daily service delivery and procedural friction bear the heaviest cognitive-emotional load of navigating competing logics. Figure 3(b) reveals that the dominant resolution strategies are silent compromise (38%) and passive conformity (31%), together accounting for 69% of conflict responses. Both represent one-way adjustment patterns in which BerAKHLAK logic concedes, not the dominant logics. Pragmatic hybridization genuine integration of competing logics accounts for only 18%, and open resistance only 8%.

The most pronounced conflict type is procedural-versus-responsive in direct-service OPDs (Civil Registration, Investment Services). Observation over 12 working days found 73% of procedural-responsive conflicts resolved through undocumented informal mechanisms—a privatisation of institutional conflict where structural problems are devolved to individual coping. Conflict between superior instruction and professional judgement is equally consequential: 83.3% of functional officials and administrators reported facing situations where leader instructions did not align with technical-professional considerations, and 90% chose to follow instructions, justifying this by the strategic importance of maintaining harmonious relations. This cumulative pattern erodes professional autonomy and consistently weakens the competent value: aparatur learn that following the dominant logic is safer than enacting BerAKHLAK.

Logic Balance Strategies

Sorong City Government has nominally complete formal mechanisms civil-service ethics code, sanction procedures, cross-OPD coordination forums but their operational consistency is weak. Of 47 recorded disciplinary cases (2022–2024), none was explicitly linked to a BerAKHLAK value violation; all were framed administratively. Of seven analysed OPDs, only DPMPTSP and Diskominfo (29%) actively manage logic tensions through explicit value communication, bottom-up initiative space, and performance-based decisions. The remaining 71% display conformist leadership that follows the dominant logic without actively negotiating BerAKHLAK. Most strikingly, 71% of OPDs use decoupling as their adaptation strategy—displaying formal compliance externally while internal practice continues under old logics; only 29% achieve substantive hybridisation, and zero show structured partial hybridisation.

This decoupling pattern is most clearly visualised in the gap between externally measured and internally measured indicators (Figure 4).

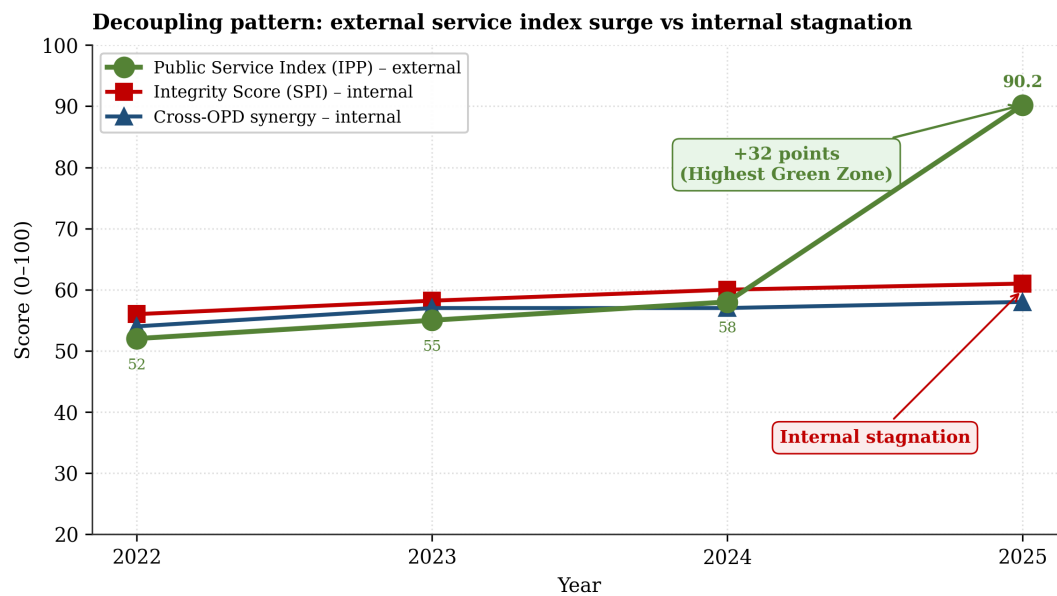


Figure 4. Decoupling pattern: external Public Service Index surge versus internal indicator stagnation (2022–2025)

Source: Analysis of IPP (Kemenpan-RB), SPI (KPK), and cross-OPD synergy data, 2026

Figure 4 visualises the institutional decoupling most starkly. From 2022 to 2024, all three indicators tracked closely (52–60 range). In 2025, the Public Service Index surged 32 points to 90.2 (Highest Green Zone), while the integrity score and cross-OPD synergy remained essentially stagnant (61 and 58 respectively). This trajectory cannot be explained by genuine organisational transformation, which would lift all three indicators in parallel. It is precisely de Bree & Stoopendaal (2020) decoupling in action: the organisation produces dramatic improvement on indicators externally measured and visible to oversight authorities (Ministry of Administrative Reform, Ombudsman), while internal-governance dimensions invisible to external evaluation remain unchanged. As DiMaggio & Powell 1983) predict, isomorphic pressure produces convergence on formal structure without convergence on substantive practice.

Configuration Synthesis

Reading the four dimensions together yields a coherent diagnosis: Sorong City Government operates in logic plurality with clear dominance by bureaucratic-hierarchical and relational logics, while BerAKHLAK logic remains subordinate, activated only situationally. Figure 5 maps the configuration.

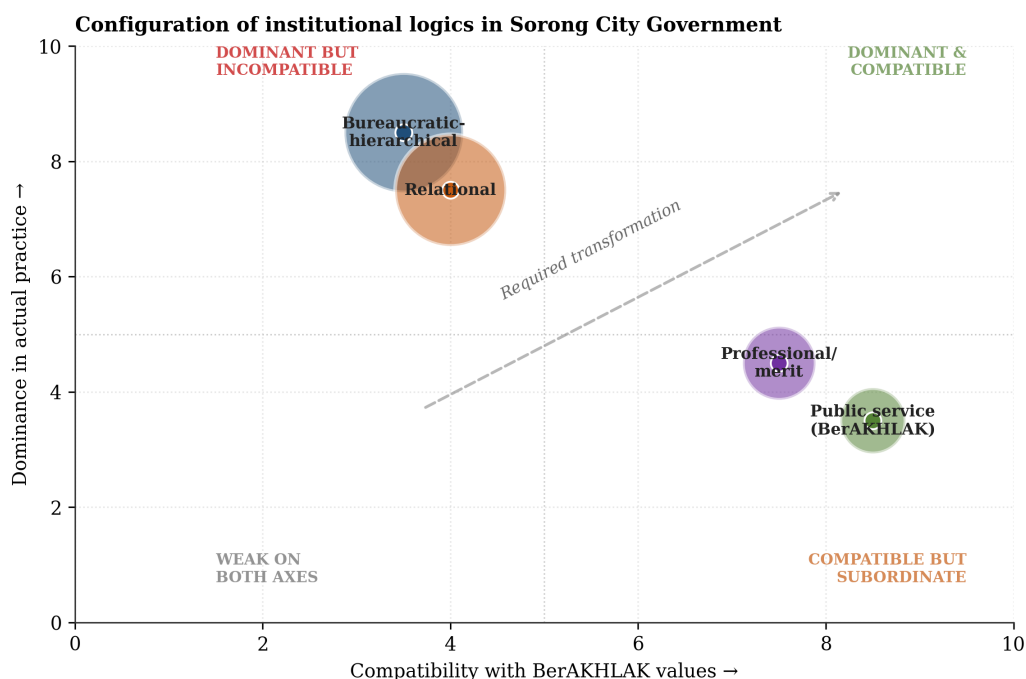


Figure 5. Configuration of institutional logics in Sorong City Government: dominance versus BerAKHLAK compatibility

Source: Processed thematic research data

Figure 5 shows the structural challenge precisely: the two most dominant logics (bureaucratic-hierarchical at 8.5/10 dominance, relational at 7.5/10) sit in the “dominant but incompatible” quadrant with BerAKHLAK compatibility of only 3.5–4.0/10. Conversely, the two most BerAKHLAK-compatible logics (public-service logic at 8.5/10, professional/merit at 7.5/10) sit in the “compatible but subordinate” quadrant with practice dominance of only 3.5–4.5/10. Transformation requires shifting the configuration diagonally raising the dominance of compatible logics while reducing the dominance of incompatible ones a structural intervention impossible through value socialisation alone. Table 1 summarises the diagnosis across the four dimensions.

Table 1. Summary of institutional-logics findings across four dimensions

Dimension	Status	Principal Finding
Dominant logic	Bureaucratic-hierarchical + relational	BerAKHLAK only 8–10% in internal decisions; 30% only under external pressure; 1.16% budget allocation.
Logic compatibility	Low to partial	Sharpest contradictions on Accountable, Competent, Adaptive, Collaborative (compatibility scores 2–3/10).
Daily conflict	Intense, privatised	68% of staff experience >3 conflicts/week; 69% resolution via silent compromise/passive conformity; 73% procedural-responsive conflicts resolved informally.
Balance strategy	Decoupling dominant	71% of OPDs use decoupling; only 29% substantive hybridisation; 32-point IPP surge in 2025 without corresponding internal improvement.

Source: Processed thematic research data

The conventional understanding of public-policy implementation typically rests on the assumption that implementation failure is an individual matter undisciplined apparatus, indecisive leaders, uncooperative communities. The institutional logics approach (Michel et al., 2022; Sandfort & Moulton, 2020; Xiao et al., 2025) rejects this assumption and offers a more structural proposition: bureaucracy never operates in a single-value space but in a contested field of institutional logics each carrying claims to legitimacy. From this starting point, the Sorong City condition where bureaucratic-hierarchical and relational logics compete with BerAKHLAK is not anomaly but the normal expression of public organisations in logic plurality. The question is not whether plurality exists, but how its dominance configuration forms and whether the organisation can negotiate it productively.

Klausen et al. (2021) established that value conflict is an inherent consequence of organisational existence within multi-institutional systems. When local government sits at the intersection of modern-state demands for professionalism and operates within a society organised by kinship and communal solidarity, plurality cannot be avoided—only managed. Almandoz & Thornton, (2025); Schumm & Denizel, (2025) explain why one logic dominates: not because of inherent superiority but because of stronger structural support embedded in incentive systems, leadership patterns, and coordination mechanisms. The hierarchical logic in Sorong draws support from decades of command systems, monologic meeting culture, and the absence of mechanisms rewarding bottom-up initiative; the relational logic draws from the Papua Barat Daya social context organising trust on group-identity bases; BerAKHLAK draws only on formal declarations and visual artefacts, lacking incentive structures, accountability mechanisms, or experiential design that would make it concretely relevant. Logic dominance, in short, is structural, not normative.

Compatibility analysis (Figure 2) explains why normatively correct values still fail to internalise: substantive internalisation requires that the logic carrying the new value does not fundamentally contradict the dominant logic. Pache and Santos (2013) demonstrate that logic incompatibility is typically met with partial adoption: elements not contradicting the dominant logic are absorbed; those requiring change are ignored or distorted. Sorong's differential value-by-value adoption confirms this: Service-oriented achieves partial adoption because external pressure (community, oversight bodies) aligns even with hierarchical logic through leadership instruction, whereas Accountable, Competent, Adaptive, and Collaborative stagnate because they require change within the dominant logics themselves. The starkest contradiction lies in Loyal, which demands fundamental redefinition from personal-relational to institutional-professional loyalty. In (Scott (2014) terms, personal-relational loyalty operates at the cultural-cognitive pillar the deepest, most change-resistant layer governing how actors understand reality and identify themselves. Changing it is not a matter of socialisation but reconstruction of institutional identity.

Personal cost matters. Smets, (Mota, 2022) show that individuals experiencing logic conflict develop hybrid practices, but these require significant cognitive and emotional energy because individuals must continuously calculate which logic is relevant, what risks they bear, and how to display compliance to different audiences. When this navigation burden is wholly devolved to individuals without organisational support, the result is as in Sorong: 68% of implementing staff experience logic conflict more than three times per week with dominant resolution through silent compromise and passive conformity the safest strategy personally but most damaging institutionally because it consistently produces BerAKHLAK's defeat. Mishra (2023); Riak PhD & Bill, (2022) emphasise that the issue is not eliminating conflict but providing institutional infrastructure that enables productive, transparent, and consistent response. Without such infrastructure, the 73% of procedural-responsive conflicts resolved through undocumented informal mechanisms in Sorong constitute a privatisation of institutional

conflict: systemic problems devolved to individuals, with solutions that are inconsistent, unlearnable, and unaccountable.

The strategic analysis reaches the most operational question: which strategy is chosen and what are its consequences? Lu (2025) framework identifies a spectrum from decoupling (most defensive) through compromise to genuine hybridisation (most transformative). Sorong sits dominantly at the defensive end. Hensel & Guérard, (2020); Li & Chung (2020) show public organisations operate under strong isomorphic pressure to display structures matching institutional standards for legitimacy; when genuine adoption is too costly socially and politically, decoupling becomes the most rational short-term strategy displaying formal compliance on externally visible aspects while old logics operate undisturbed internally. The dramatic 2025 IPP surge alongside stagnant SPI and synergy indices (Figure 4) is the most quantitative expression of institutional decoupling. DiMaggio & Powell (1983) deepen this by showing that isomorphism produces convergence on formal structure without convergence on substantive practice; Sorong demonstrates selective isomorphism: conformity on dimensions measured externally while preserving logic autonomy on dimensions beyond oversight reach.

The variation among OPDs is instructive. The two OPDs (DPMPTSP, Diskominfo) more actively managing logic conflict offer perspective on conditions enabling genuine hybridisation. (Tjemkes & Mihalache, 2021; Vince et al., 2024) shows that successful substantive strategies depend on actor capacity particularly leadership to articulate inter-logic tensions explicitly and design responses finding integration points rather than choosing one logic. This capacity, found organically in two OPD leaders, did not arise from formal training but from a combination of personal reflexivity and situational context; its personal rather than systemic character is the most fundamental institutional problem, because transformation depending on individual quality cannot be replicated nor sustained beyond tenure. (Busscher et al., 2025), through studies of two cities developing different fund-management logics, shows that local logic configurations produce significant practice variation even within identical regulatory frameworks. This explains why nationally uniform BerAKHLAK internalisation produces highly variable results: the Papua Barat Daya local context high power distance, strong collectivism, dominant kinship structures creates a distinctive logic configuration that cannot be addressed identically to areas with different cultural contexts.

This convergent argument leads to the central theoretical contribution: BerAKHLAK internalisation failure in Sorong City is a failure of institutional-logics management, not a failure of values nor of individuals. Damayanthi & Gooneratne (2024); Stevenson et al. (2024) show that shifts in institutional-logic dominance occur over long time scales and cannot be accelerated through formal regulation or socialisation campaigns alone; they require capacity to actively manage the rivalry of competing institutional logics, demanding three simultaneous conditions: explicit recognition that logic plurality and conflict are normal and ineradicable; design of formal mechanisms providing legitimate, consistent conflict-resolution arenas; and development of systemic leadership capacity as skilled logic mediators rather than mere executors of hierarchical instruction. Implications extend beyond Sorong: this finding challenges the foundational assumption underlying Indonesian bureaucratic value-internalisation policy design, which rests on three pillars proven insufficient adding symbolic artefacts, intensifying normative socialisation, and formal-document value inclusion. All three operate at the institutional-isomorphism level, pushing formal compliance with new logics, but do not touch the mechanisms determining which logic dominates in practice.

Limitations include the single-case design, which provides depth but limits statistical generalisation; comparative studies across Indonesian local governments with varying cultural contexts would strengthen external validity. Logic dominance and compatibility scores derive from thematic coding rather than standardised instruments; future research could triangulate with formal institutional-mapping techniques. The cross-sectional design captures one point in time; longitudinal research could trace how logic configurations evolve under sustained institutional-logics management interventions.

Conclusion

The BerAKHLAK implementation problem at Sorong City Government is structural because the existing institutional-logics configuration systemically does not give space for BerAKHLAK logic to become dominant. Across the four dimensions: dominance reveals bureaucratic-hierarchical and relational logics dominating real practice with BerAKHLAK subordinate and only situationally active under intense external monitoring; compatibility is very low, particularly on Accountable, Competent, Adaptive, and Collaborative values requiring change to internal working logic rather than mere formal compliance; daily conflict surrounds all hierarchical levels with privatised resolution patterns that consistently render BerAKHLAK the conceding party (38% silent compromise, 31% passive conformity); and balance strategy is dominated by decoupling (71% of OPDs), most starkly evidenced in the 32-point Public Service Index surge in 2025 alongside stagnant integrity and synergy indicators. So long as intervention design rests on the value-socialisation paradigm assuming aparatur change if given enough information and symbols and has not shifted to the institutional-logics management paradigm recognising that behaviour is determined by competing-logic configurations and only changes through structural reconfiguration the Sorong pattern will continue to recur: BerAKHLAK well-documented, prominently displayed, included in documents, yet absent from real decisions. What is needed is not more banners or socialisation but interventions that restructure incentive architectures making old logics no longer most rewarding, build conflict-resolution mechanisms giving BerAKHLAK consistent winning chances, and develop systemic leadership capacity as skilled logic mediators. Without this paradigm shift, BerAKHLAK will remain a logic operating only when external eyes are watching symbolic enough for legitimacy, substantively absent for transformation.

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